Chief of Staff
Captain Tim Giardina

SEVENTH Fleet Staff and Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your superb support over the last year. It is difficult for Missy and I to believe that another holiday season is behind us. We feel as if "we just arrived". At the same time, I feel like I've never been anywhere else. Although not always an easy experience, the SEVENTH Fleet feels like a familiar place with many relationships forged through hard work and admiration for what each and every staff member has accomplished. I've never been assigned with so many dedicated and hard working professionals. Similarly, I've never been in an environment where the support of the families was so strong. Thank you all.

Missy and I thought naively that living half way around the world would slow the sands of time somewhat, but have found things to be exactly the opposite. Most of the "to do lists" in our personal lives will likely have to be carried unfinished to our next duty station or retirement location. As I wrote my "standard Christmas letter" this year I reflected on the challenges and rewards of this job and duty in the FDNF. It occurred to me that although our schedule remains extremely busy and challenging, this job also affords a wonderful career broadening opportunity for each of us as well as a travel schedule with more quality port visits each year than I experienced in the previous 24 years of my Navy career in the Submarine Force. In the past 18 months, Missy has met the ship several times. We're also looking forward to several upcoming adventures with some potential rendezvous. Missy and I are also holding on to the notion that we'll be here for the summer of 2005 to partake in the "southern swing" to Australia. Hopefully, the Navy will keep me in place until after my first trip "down under".

One final note. The SEVENTH Fleet staff and our subordinate commands are currently very involved in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance efforts as a result of the Tsunami that has devastated many of our neighbor countries in Asia. As usual, our SEVENTH Fleet team has handled the additional workload in stride and has performed superbly. As a result of the disaster, we are reviewing our schedule for the next 3 months to determine necessary changes.

It is a privilege and an honor to be a part of our great military, protecting and defending America as well as providing assistance in other ways when appropriate. We hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season and happiest New Year. God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America.

Warmest Regards,
Missy and Tim Giardina

Command Master Chief
Ashley Smith

Happy New Year to everyone! Last year seems like a blur, where did it go? I hope everyone had a Great Christmas, and enjoyed the time with family. I know many of our Sailors and their families traveled during the last part of December, and I sure am glad they all made it back safely. Some are still on leave with their friends and families. I hope the New Year brings you all that you were hoping for. The last part of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 have been extremely demanding for the 7TH Fleet staff and all of the people in this area with the recent disasters, specifically the recent Tsunamis around Thailand, India and Somalia. Many of the staff spent the Holidays working on the relief efforts for those ravaged areas. Our Prayers go out to all Families that lost someone in that terrible disaster. We sure were glad to hear that none of our Sailors or their Families were in the areas affected by the earthquake or Tsunami.

The New Year means more underway time for the USS BLUE RIDGE and the Staff as we get underway at the end of January for several months traveling around the regions of Asia. It's been awhile since our last underway. We will be gone for some time, make sure you have all of those loose ends tied up, ie... Powers of Attorney, Vehicle arrangements and registration, etc.. Until next month, take care of each other.

CNOCM (SW) Ashley Smith
Command Master Chief
COMSEVENTHFLT